IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 13-17 without prejudice.

Please enter the pending claims as follows:

1. (Once Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a holder adapted to mount a substrate;

a stage adapted to position said holder in a chamber;

a pumping system adapted to evacuate said chamber;

an imaging system adapted to locate an opaque defect in said substrate;

a gas delivery system adapted to dispense a reactant gas towards said defect; and

an electron delivery system adapted to direct electrons towards said opaque defect and induce etching by said reactant gas.

2. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said imaging system comprises an electron column.

3. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said electron delivery system comprises an electron column.

4. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said substrate comprises a transmissive DUV mask.

5. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said opaque defect comprises chrome and said reactant gas comprises chlorine and oxygen.

6. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said substrate comprises a reflective EUV mask.

7. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said opaque defect comprises an absorber and said reactant gas comprises Xenon Fluoride (XeF_2).

8. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said opaque defect comprises Carbon and said reactant gas comprises water vapor or oxygen.

9. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a focusing system adapted to highly focus said electrons on said opaque defect.

10. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a scanning system adapted to scan said electrons across said opaque defect.

11. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising an acceleration system adapted to provide a low acceleration voltage for said electrons.

12. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a computer adapted to control said electron delivery system.